

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION OFFICER, ORISSA,
145-SAHEED NAGAR, BHUBANESWAR-751 007,
January 4, 1984.

S. K. PATNAIK

REFERENCES

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6. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF GREAT CRESTED GREBE
PODICEPS CRISTATUS CRISTATUS (LINN.) IN COASTAL
ANDHRA PRADESH

While on a nature trek to Thatipudi forest area and the reservoir situated in the foothills of Anantagiri ghats of Vizag District, on 27th February 1983, we observed a pair of Great Crested Grebes in the reservoir.

The reservoir is devoid of any marshy vegetation and very deep with abundant supply of fish. The pair of birds were 30 feet apart from each other at a distance of 50 feet from

the impoundment bund with prominent crests visible to the naked eye. We also timed its submergence and recorded the longest dive as 130 seconds, between 0400-0430 p.m.

This constitutes the first record of this species for Andhra Pradesh and extends its known range by about 450 km southwards from the last coastal record at Puri on the East Coast (HANDBOOK 1: 3).

ANDHRA PRADESH NATURAL
HISTORY SOCIETY,
DASAPALLA HILLS,
VISAKHAPATNAM-3,
March 7, 1983.

K. S. R. KRISHNA RAJU
B. L. PRABHU
P. R. GOPALA RAJU

7. A NOTE ON THE CATCHING OF MIGRATORY BIRDS WHICH
VISIT ALIPORE ZOO, CALCUTTA IN WINTER

(With a photograph)

Several thousands of migratory birds (wild ducks) visit the Alipore Zoological Garden, Calcutta each Winter and take shelter in its lake. These birds include the following —

1. Lesser Whistling Teal — [*Dendrocygna javanica* (Horsfield)]
2. Garganey Teal — [*Anas querquedula* (Linnaeus)]

3. Greater Whistling Teal — [*Dendrocygna bicolor* (Vieillot)]
4. Pintail Duck — [*Anas acuta* (Linnaeus)]
5. Comb Duck — [*Sarkidiornis melanotos melanotos* (Pennant)]

Among these birds, Lesser Whistling Teals come in large numbers and represent about 70% of the total population. The percentage of Garganey Teal is about 29% and the remaining 1% is represented by Greater Whistling Teals, Pintail Ducks and Comb ducks. They generally start coming in the middle of October and leave the Garden at the end of April each year. The number of these birds in the Zoo varies from time to time but the

number of birds is generally seen in the month of January.

The birds during their stay at the Zoo spend the day in the lake and leave at dusk to feed many miles away in the countryside and come back to the lake at dawn. These movements of birds at dusk and at dawn take place throughout their stay (about 6 months) at this Zoo.

It has been observed that some people of the nearby Orphanage market area fly Kites, the threads of which are full of fishing hooks tied at intervals of 6 to 8 inches (as shown in the plate) with the threads for catching the birds. The kites are flown in the evening

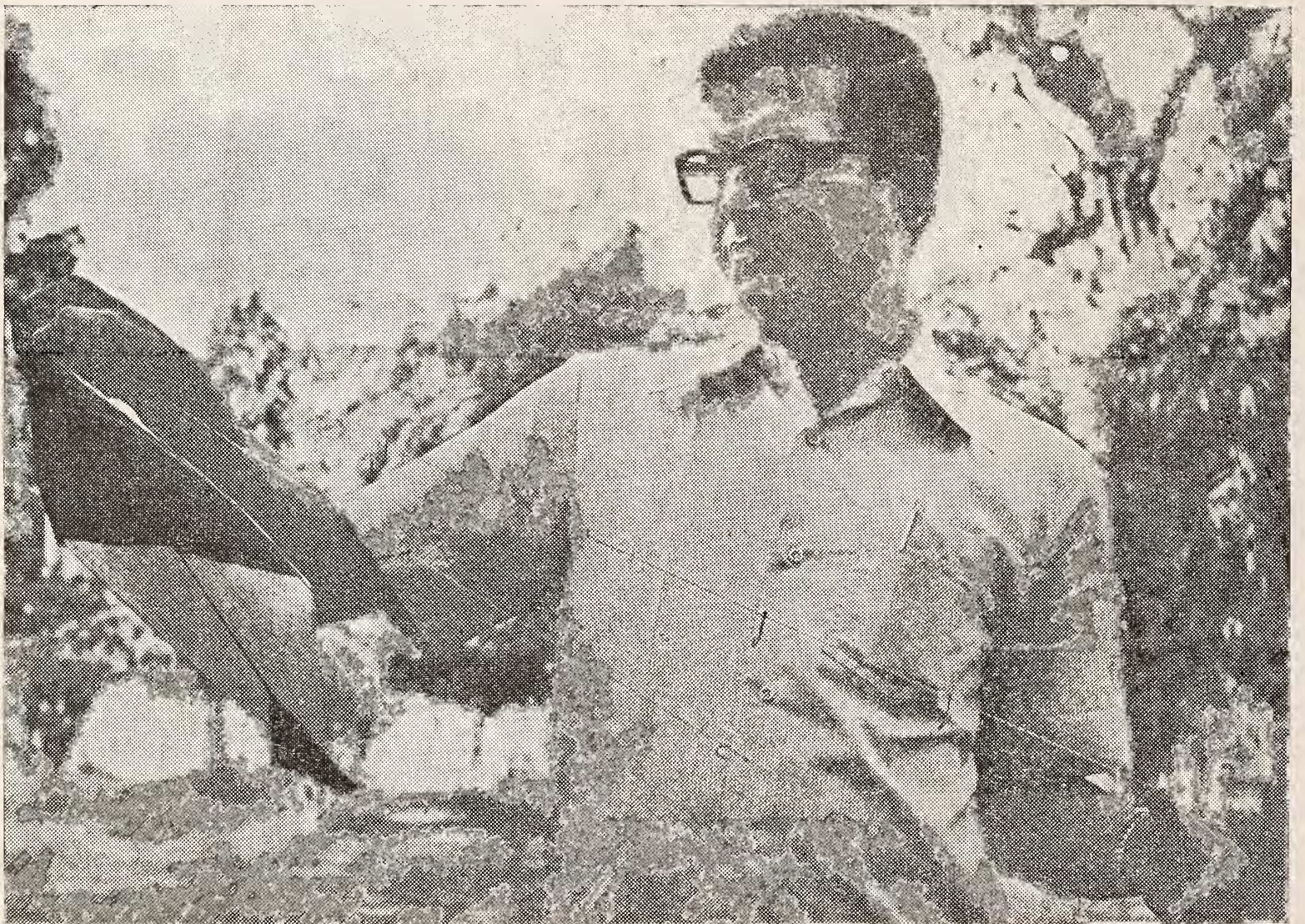


Photo. 1. Photograph of a kite showing fishing hooks being tied with the flying string.

and also in the early morning on the flight paths of the duck. These birds generally fly in flocks, of 5 to 15 birds in each flock. The bird-catchers fly the kites in such a way that they can easily put the threads with hooks on the flight paths of the birds by alternately pulling and releasing the kite's string. Some of the ducks during their flight to and from the

lake of the Zoo become entangled with the fishing hooks and are caught.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Shri Humayun Abdulali, 75, Abdul Rahman Street, Bombay-400 003 for his encouragement.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN,
ALIPORE,
CALCUTTA - 700 027,
May 4, 1983.

ADHIR KUMAR DAS

8. THE JUVENILE PLUMAGE OF THE LITTLE EGRET COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE WHITE-PHASE INDIAN REEF HERON

(With a text-figure)

The Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta* (Linn.), is mainly an inland species which is replaced by the polymorphic Indian Reef Heron, *Egretta gularis* Bosc, on the western coast of India. Whether these two are separate species or merely the inland and coastal races of the same species, has not been satisfactorily resolved as yet. In their recent study on the systematics and evolutionary relationships among the herons, Payne and Riskey (1976) have considered *E. garzetta* and *E. gularis* as members of a superspecies.

The Little Egret resembles the white-phase Reef Heron. A far-inland population of the Little Egret can be clearly distinguished from an exclusively marine Reef Heron population, as the former is characterized by the presence of a black beak whereas the latter has a yellow beak. However, in the transitional zone where both the marine as well as the inland waters are important sources of food, the distinction between the two species based on the beak

colour breaks down and the white birds with the beak colour ranging from jet black to yellow can be seen interbreeding with the grey morphs of the Reef Heron in the same heronry (Parasharya & Naik, *unpublished*). That there is a considerable overlap between the tarsus length of the Reef Heron and Little Egret has been demonstrated earlier (Ali & Ripley 1968, Hancock & Elliot 1978). In view of these, we thought it desirable to check the contention of Ali & Ripley (1968) that the Little Egret has 'snow-white' chicks in contrast to the Reef Heron whose white chicks are dappled with grey.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A heronry in the grounds of the Municipal Hill Garden Zoo, Ahmedabad (23° 04' N, 72° 38' E) located about 92 kilometres from the sea coast was visited on 28 September 1982. The Little Egret was breeding there along with the Large Egret (*Egretta alba*), Median